

Appl. No. 10/683,801

REMARKS

Claim 8 is amended. Claims 8-13, 20 and 22-26 are pending in the application. Claims 8-13, 20 and 22-26 are pending in the application.

Applicant acknowledges the Examiner's indicated allowability of the subject matter of claims 20 and 22-26.

Claims 1-5 and 7 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite. Claims 1-5 and 7 also stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Donnelly, U.S. Patent No. 6,143,658 in view of Kwag, U.S. Patent No. 6,232,228. Without admission as to the propriety of the Examiner's rejections, claims 1-5 and 7 are cancelled.

Claims 8-19 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Donnelly in view of Kwag. With respect to claims 14-19, without admission as to the propriety of the Examiner's rejection, such claims are cancelled. With respect to claims 8-13, independent claim 8 is amended to recite etching an opening through first and second insulative materials to expose a copper-containing material at the base of the opening. Claim 8 further recites exposing the surface to a cleaning solution formed from hydrochloric acid, nitric acid, and hydrofluoric acid, where the exposing removes less than 5 Angstroms of the first and second insulative materials from sidewalls of the openings without forming divots at the interface between the first and second insulative materials. The amendment of claim 8 is supported by the specification at, for example, page 7, lines 3-14. Claim 8 is allowable over the art of record for at least reasons similar to those set forth by the Examiner regarding allowability of claim 20.

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Dependent claims 9-13 are allowable Donnelly and Kwag for at least the reason that they depend from allowable base claim 8.

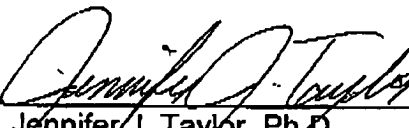
For the reasons discussed above, claims 8-13, 20 and 22-26 are allowable. Accordingly, the application is in condition for immediate allowance and applicant requests formal allowance of claims 8-13, 20 and 22-26 in the Examiner's next action.

Respectfully submitted,

Dated:

October 29, 2004

By:


Jennifer J. Taylor, Ph.D.
Reg. No. 48,711